



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# A Health and Social Care Research and Development Strategic Framework for Wales

a consultation  
document

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Please send your comments by 17 May 2002 to:

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## **Foreword**

Research and development should be viewed as central to the development of health and social care services. The establishment of the National Assembly for Wales provides an opportunity to make sure that the breadth of research and development from Wales is effectively addressing the need of the Welsh population and also contributing to the development of knowledge in health and social care in the UK and internationally. There are some major strengths to be built on and there are gaps that need to be addressed.

This strategic framework identifies three areas to be addressed. The need for a clear direction for R&D; resources to be targeted at key priority areas; and the development of a skilled workforce to deliver high quality R&D. This strategic framework presents a vision of how R&D in health and social care can be developed to address these areas and indicates how an evidence-based approach to policy and practice development can be achieved.

**Hilary Pepler**

Chair, Health and Social Care R&D Strategy Advisory Group

## A Health and Social Care Research and Development Strategic Framework for Wales

### Executive Summary

- i. *Improving Health in Wales: A Plan for the NHS and its Partners* identified clear expectations of research and development and to achieve those expectations announced that a new research and development strategy for health and social care would be published. The same broad agenda was outlined for social services in *Building for the Future* and for the wider health agenda in *Better Health Better Wales*. In addition to addressing the needs of the population of Wales directly Wales has made a significant contribution to the development of UK and international research particularly in the fields of basic and clinical sciences and it is essential that such a contribution continues to be made. The aims of this consultative strategic framework are to develop the infrastructure to enable Wales to become:

*A country which develops its policies on the basis of evidence and has mechanisms in place by which those planning and delivering health and social care services are aware of, and actively use, the results of research in their work to improve the health and social care of the people of Wales.*

- ii. Such a vision will be long term and will require a strategic approach to guide investment in key areas. This consultative strategic framework provides an outline of an approach to research and development within a context of evidence based policy development and evaluation. The framework is presented in three sections:
- Background and the context of the strategic framework;
  - The R&D framework for Wales;
  - Conclusions and Next Steps.

At the end of each section a series of Keystones are outlined which suggest possible developments in the implementation of the new strategic framework.

- iii. The vision outlined will require long-term development. For the first 5 years of the implementation of the strategic framework three areas are identified as priorities:
- Establishing an infrastructure to support analyses of the health and social care needs of the Welsh population;
  - The creation of a health and social care research workforce capable of delivering high quality research in key areas;
  - The creation of a culture and an infrastructure in which evidence based practice and policy making can occur.
- iv. The establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 created a new democratic structure for Wales and a new policy making forum. Responsibility for health and social care has been devolved to the National Assembly and this has provided an entirely new context for health and social care research and development in Wales.
- v. A number of key strengths can be built on. Wales provides a wide-ranging geographical, demographic and cultural context with a variety of population characteristics. There has been a strong tradition of research related activity in Wales. As well as locally Welsh researchers have made a contribution to both the UK and international research arenas. The results of the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise have illustrated where some of these strengths lie. Within Wales a wide range of collaborative networks which often cross many of the traditional boundaries characteristic of health and social care. All these features combine to support the development of multi-sectoral, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working in both service and research terms.
- vi. Three areas can be identified as requiring development. Firstly there is a need for a clear new strategic direction for R&D in Wales. Secondly there is a need for resources which are targeted towards the achievement of the new strategic direction. Thirdly, integral to the development of the new strategic direction will be the need for an increase in the number and quality of researchers to meet the

needs of the new strategic priorities. These areas are addressed by the strategic framework.

- vii. To achieve a research and development programme which is relevant to those delivering services and users of services in Wales there is a need to ensure a wide sense of ownership of the R&D programme. In addition to the involvement of service professionals, service users and wider public involvement in R&D is required. Their involvement will mirror those of professional groups with an interest in research and development. These are:
- Setting priorities for research;
  - Participants in research;
  - Undertaking research;
  - Recipients of the results of research.
- viii. Investment made in high quality R&D in Wales will result in a return on that investment through achieving greater effectiveness in service delivery, potentially attracting research resources to Wales or technological development. There is evidence that Wales is not attracting its full potential share of external non-commercial research funding. The funding base for research in Wales is comparatively small when compared to other parts of the UK. There can be no guarantee of further expansion of the current R and D budgets and the first priority is to review the current usage and make sure that current budgets are most effectively used. This will involve a review of current programmes in light of the new strategic framework. It will also be necessary to assess the validity of bids for Assembly funding against the wider R&D programmes underway elsewhere in the UK. Also, there is a need to ensure that maximum resources from other sources are being achieved.
- ix. Within a framework for evidence-based policy development and evaluation four inter-related areas of research and development activity are identified. The four R&D areas are:

- Context – analysis of the nature of the determinants of health and social well-being and the demand for, and supply of, health and social care services;
  - Content – analysis of effective assessments and interventions;
  - Capacity – development of research capacity to deliver high quality R&D products;
  - Communication – the translation of R&D results into policy practice and public knowledge.
- x. The National Assembly is committed to the evaluation of policy initiatives. A key issue in the planning and provision of health and social care service delivery will be the ability to monitor trends in the health and social well-being of the Welsh population. Central to the development of such approaches is the availability of high quality information and intelligence to inform policy development and implementation. There is a need generally to increase the ability to undertake high quality analysis and synthesis of research evidence. The development of national data sets focusing on key groups will enable more accurate planning and research commissioning to take place.
- xi. A key feature of service delivery in the health and social care sectors has been the continued growth in demand resulting in growing operating pressures as well as escalating costs. Analysis of the factors driving demands will be linked to research activity on the management of demand and the most effective responses to the needs of the Welsh population and implications for service delivery. Essentially this can be seen as an analysis of the demand and supply factors in health and social care services and their management.
- xii. There is a tradition of high quality research and development in biomedical and clinical health care. Partly as the result of the WORD social care responsive programme there has been recent growth in research in Wales focusing on practice in the social care field. It is proposed that 5 year programmes in key National Assembly priority areas such as cancer, mental health and children will be implemented and that these consist of local, national and UK focussed activity.

- xiii. Critical to the successful development of research and development in Wales is a high quality research workforce. Wales has many researchers of international standard and clearly a strategy will need to ensure that those individuals will remain in Wales and that new high quality researchers continue to emerge. A co-ordinated approach to the development of the research workforce is required. This will need to be done in collaboration with others with a responsibility for professional development in the service and academic sectors and could include joint funding initiatives for areas of specific priority for Wales.
  
- xiv. Traditionally much of the focus of research management has been on the commissioning process with relatively less attention having been given to ensuring that the results of research are used. Put bluntly, there is limited purpose in even the best research and development if it is carried out in a vacuum, and the results not shared with those working in the services, or in allied research activity. Ensuring use of research results will need to begin at the earliest point in the commissioning process. Clear customers must be identified at the point of initiation of research and a planned programme drawn up to manage the dissemination and use of the results. Critical in achieving such a situation will be reinforcing the links between practice, teaching and training and research. In addition there will be a need to develop the links between research and development and other quality improvement initiatives such as audit and inspection and performance management.
  
- xv. The health and social care sectors are increasingly recognised as key players in the economy of Wales. Firstly they are the main employers within Wales. Secondly they are sources of innovation and development of new technologies which are capable of exploitation commercially. A framework of operating principles is to be developed for those working in health or social care services or are collaborating with this sector on the procedures for commercial exploitation of innovations emerging from R&D.

- xvi. This strategic framework has outlined a direction for R&D in Wales designed to achieve the goal of Wales becoming a country recognised as developing practice and policy on the basis of high quality evidence. A long-term framework to achieve such a goal has been outlined. Three areas have been identified as priorities for the first five years of implementation of the strategic framework. These are:
- Establishing an infrastructure to support analyses of the health and social care needs of the Welsh population;
  - The creation of a health and social care research workforce capable of delivering high quality research in key areas;
  - The creation of a culture and an infrastructure in which evidence based practice and policy making can occur.
- xvii. Following the consultation period a five year implementation plan will be produced which in addition to specifying ways in which the strategy will be implemented, will also assess the implication of the strategy for key sectors and groups with an interest in health and social care.

## **A Health and Social Care Research and Development Strategic Framework for Wales**

### **1 Introduction**

*“The future vision is of an integrated teaching, research and specialist network capable of delivering world-class services to the people of Wales, and producing top-class professionals to meet the needs of the whole health care system.”*

- 1.1 *Improving Health in Wales: A Plan for the NHS and its Partners* identified clear expectations of research and development and to achieve those expectations announced that a new research and development strategy for health and social care would be published. The same broad agenda was outlined for social services in *Building for the Future* and for the wider health agenda in *Better Health Better Wales*. In addition to addressing the needs of the population of Wales directly Wales has made a significant contribution to the development of the UK and international research particularly in the fields of basic and clinical sciences and it is essential that such a contribution continues to be made. The aims of this consultative strategic framework are to develop the infrastructure to enable Wales to become:

*A country which develops its policies on the basis of evidence and has mechanisms in place by which those planning and delivering health and social care services are aware of, and actively use, the results of research in their work to improve the health and social care of the people of Wales.*

- 1.2 Such a vision will be long term and will require a strategic approach to guide investment in key areas. This consultative strategic framework provides an outline of an approach to research and development within a context of evidence based policy development and evaluation. The framework will be presented in three sections:
- Background and the context of the strategic framework;
  - The R&D framework for Wales;

- Conclusions and Next Steps.

At the end of each section a series of Keystones are outlined which suggest possible developments in the implementation of the new strategic framework. Following the period of consultation the new strategic framework will be published and will include an initial 5-year implementation plan detailing the means by which the strategy will be implemented.

1.3 The vision outlined will require long-term development. For the first 5 years of the implementation of the strategic framework three areas are identified as priorities:

- Establishing an infrastructure to support analyses of the health and social care needs of the Welsh population;
- The creation of a health and social care research workforce capable of delivering high quality research in key areas;
- The creation of a culture and an infrastructure in which evidence based practice and policy making can occur.

1.4 The allocation of resources to research and development should be viewed as an investment with an expectation that a wide range of returns will follow such investment. The following are examples of the contribution that R&D can make to the health and social care sector and more generally to the Welsh economy and society:

- It promotes an inquisitive culture and thereby enhances quality and provides a catalyst for change;
- Underpins education and professional development and enhances the quality of qualifying practitioners;
- Provides a better understanding of the determinants of poor health and social well-being and help seeking behaviour;
- Develops new technologies to address the needs of the population;
- Ensures that policy is developed in effective ways;

- Opportunities to be involved in R&D can help to recruit and retain high quality staff;
- An active R&D culture can contribute to the national economy through attracting investment and through the exploitation of new technologies
- Research and development can enhance public confidence in services;
- Contributes to the esteem of individuals, institutions and the nation.

## Background and Context for the Strategic Framework

### 2 National Assembly Context

2.1 The establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 created a new democratic structure for Wales and a new policy making forum. Responsibility for health and social care has been devolved to the National Assembly and this has provided an entirely new context for health and social care research and development in Wales. In its operational plan *A Plan for Wales* the Assembly has made it clear that it wishes to have a sound evidence base for its policies and is developing a research and development strategy for the Assembly. A new R&D group has been established to support the development of the R&D agenda. *A Plan for Wales* has outlined the way in which the Assembly wishes to see Wales as a learning country with clear links between the academic sector and research and development and industry and service sectors.

2.2 The establishment of the National Assembly has also resulted in a redefinition of priorities for the development of health and social care in Wales. In many cases these are priorities which are shared with the other UK countries such as cancer, coronary heart disease, mental health and the support of children and a continued Welsh contribution to these initiatives is a priority. However there are also areas where policies in Wales will be different, such as in the case of the development of the Strategy for Older People in Wales, and in these areas there will be a need for a strong research base to inform the development of such policies. Three broad objectives underpinning the work of the National Assembly have also been outlined within *A Plan for Wales*. These are the achievement of:

- equal opportunities;
- sustainable development; and
- tackling social disadvantage.

These three areas have specific relevance for health and social care policy and service delivery.

2.3 As indicated above, the National Assembly has made a commitment to developing its policies on the basis of the best available evidence. The commitment includes:

- Evidence based policy making and evaluation of policy impact;
- High quality evidence based service delivery;
- Commitment to the development of a highly skilled R&D workforce;
- Commitment to making available the results of research and evaluation and acting on them.

### **3 Research Management in Wales**

3.1 The management of the health and social care R&D programmes in Wales has been undertaken by the Wales Office of Research and Development for Health and Social Care (WORD). WORD was administratively located in the University of Wales College of Medicine until it was assimilated into the National Assembly in April 2000. In 2000 a new Health and Social Care R&D Board was established within the Assembly to oversee the health and social care R&D programme, which is directly accountable to the Health and Social Care Partnership Council. In 2002 a new National Advisory Committee will be established to advise the National Assembly on matters relating to health and social care R&D.

3.2 Developments have been occurring in the field of health and social care R&D over the last decade, which will form a foundation to be built on. These foundations include *A Research and Development Strategy for Social Care in Wales*, which was published in January 1998. As a result a coherent programme of social care R&D has been developing which is more closely linked to the policy development process in addition to a continuing but small scale programme of support to responsive mode research proposals.

3.3 The first round of health grants began during 1994 on a basis of one cycle per annum. However, with the full staffing of the WORD office during 1995 this scheme then operated on a more frequent basis (up to two cycles a year during

1996). In addition programmes of small grant awards and studentships and fellowships have operated. In 1998 the Welsh Scheme for Health and Social Care Research was also transferred to WORD. A range of consultative and assessment arrangements exist for the selection and oversight of potential projects and grants.

- 3.4 In 1999 the consultation document *Making a Difference* was issued which outlined the broad framework for health related R&D in Wales. A full strategy was however not issued due to the review of WORD and the decision to assimilate WORD into the National Assembly.
- 3.5 The frameworks outlined in both *A Research and Development Strategy for Social Care in Wales* and in *Making a Difference* are still relevant. However, there is a need for clearer objectives to be set in the context of National Assembly priorities and to reflect the changes taking place in health and social care services, in Higher Education and in R&D.
- 3.6 In 2002 a *Framework for Research Governance* has been issued in Wales largely drawing on the document developed in England and also introduced in Scotland. The document is primarily a statement of standards for the conduct of research in health and social care. These quality standards will underpin research undertaken in health and social care in Wales and thereby ensure the quality of research and the safety and well being of participants in research. In 1999 three regionally based Health and Social Care Research Support Units and an All-Wales Primary Care Research Support Unit were established to provide support to those undertaking research in the health and social care sectors. These Units have been independently reviewed and the results of the review will be used to inform the development of the implementation plan for the health and social care strategic framework.
- 3.7 Over the last 6 year support has developed for NHS R&D through the Provider Funding Scheme. This continues to evolve and current initiatives include the establishment of a Support for Science stream of funding, which will provide

funding to research active NHS bodies on the basis of a formula. In addition the changes to the Provider Funding scheme will involve the development of Priorities and Needs funding to support research programmes designed to address key National Assembly and NHS priorities.

3.8 Two further developments on an England and Wales basis have had an impact on R&D. In 1999 the National Institute for Clinical Excellence was established which is an immediate customer for research undertaken in health care. In 2001 the Social Care Institute for Excellence was established as an England and Wales body designed to identify effective interventions in social care and develop guidelines for service delivery. Both of these bodies emphasise evidence-based approaches to health and social care delivery and development.

3.9 A number of current initiatives are likely to influence the development of research and development in Wales and have been taken into consideration in the development of the new strategic framework. These include the review of higher education in Wales, the Research Assessment Exercise and the expansion of clinical education in Wales. The implementation of the NHS plan *Improving Health in Wales* provides a new operational context within which research will take place.

#### **4 Strengths to Build On**

4.1 A number of key strengths can be built on. Wales provides a wide-ranging geographical, demographic and cultural context with a variety of population characteristics. The size of the population and the scale of service delivery make it unique in the UK in terms of the potential for population studies and the evaluation of the impact of policy initiatives on the Welsh population. Such studies will have relevance to other parts of the UK and internationally.

4.2 There has been a strong tradition of research related activity in Wales. As well as locally Welsh researchers have made a contribution to both the UK and international research arenas. The results of the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise has illustrated where some of these strengths lie:

- Psychology across Wales was rated highly in the RAE with a significant amount of the psychological research being focussed on health and social care issues such as mental health or the development of children;
- The laboratory sciences have continued to maintain a high standard across many of the Welsh academic institutions;
- Clinical work such as that undertaken in cancer has been recognised as being of high standard;
- Individual departments with relevance to health and social care have were also shown to be producing work of very high quality including general practice, pharmacy, professions allied to medicine and social work;
- The recent decision to establish a gene knowledge park in Wales which will involve collaboration between higher education institutions, the NHS, Techniquest and the Welsh Development Agency is illustrative of the way in which collaborative ventures can achieve access to funding for innovative developments in patient care and technological development.

4.3 There is therefore within Wales a breadth of high quality research activity capable of competing in an international arena as well as addressing key priorities for Welsh services. The outcome of Research Assessment Exercise 2001 will mean continued core research funding in Higher Education can be expected from HEFCW.

4.4 Within Wales a wide range of collaborative networks exist which often cross many of the traditional boundaries characteristic of health and social care. The links between health and social care have been developing over many years in both service delivery and policy development. Networks for service delivery, which span the geography of Wales, are being developed. All these features combine to support the development of multi-sectoral, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working in both service and research terms.

## **5 Areas to be Addressed**

- 5.1 Three areas can be identified as requiring development. Firstly there is a need for a clear new strategic direction for R&D in Wales. Secondly there is a need for resources which are targeted towards the achievement of the new strategic direction. Thirdly, integral to the development of the new strategic direction will be the need for an increase in the number and quality of researchers to meet the needs of the new strategic priorities. The strategic framework will address all of these areas.

## **6 Breadth of the Strategic Framework**

- 6.1 This strategic framework covers a broad range of research activity. The range includes basic laboratory based research, clinical and health and social care services research and social science based research. The establishment of the National Assembly has highlighted the need for an increased health and social care services research capacity. However the Research Assessment Exercise highlighted the strength of laboratory and clinical research in Wales and it is critical that Wales continues to make an UK and international contribution in these areas.
- 6.2 A key consideration in the development of this strategic framework has been the breadth that is covered. Health and social care will be the central focus of the document with a recognition of the distinct needs of the NHS and social care services as well as where there are major advantages in joint approaches. The broad principle adopted is that unless there is a particular disadvantage to a specific sector, joint approaches should be the norm.
- 6.3 Within health service considerations it will be necessary to distinguish the unique requirements of such areas as primary care or NHS professional groups although again multidisciplinary approaches and joint working should be the key principle. Clearly health and social care interests are broader than those of the NHS or social services departments. The new patterns of investment to implement the

strategic framework will ensure that public health research and development, health promotion R&D, also social inclusion and broader social policies such as youth justice are addressed and appropriately linked to health and social care research and development.

- 6.4 The National Assembly has emphasised the importance of initiatives, which cut across traditional policy boundaries. Indeed the ability to cross such boundaries is a strength, which can be capitalised on in Wales. Mechanisms by which mainstream health and social care R&D relate to wider issues such as housing or economic development have been established within the National Assembly and will support the development of R&D across the breadth of interests of key constituent groups in Wales.

## **7 Involving Stakeholders in Research and Development**

- 7.1 To achieve a research and development programme which is relevant to those delivering services and users of services in Wales there is a need to ensure a wide sense of ownership of the R&D programme. This will also ensure that the results of research are used to inform practice and policy development. The establishment of the Health and Social Care Research and Development National Advisory Committee will provide a formal vehicle to achieve greater ownership. The Committee will advise the Welsh Assembly Government on health and social care R&D and will comprise of representatives from the National Assembly, health and social care services, higher education, research funders, the voluntary sector and service consumers.
- 7.2 The general public and those who use services are key stakeholders in the process of planning the delivery of health and social care services. A general imperative for increasing the involvement of users of services and the general public in NHS and social care services has been spelt out in a range of white and green papers including *Better Health, Better Wales, Building for the Future, Modernising Local Government* and more recently *Improving Health in Wales*. This new emphasis is designed to ensure that services are more accountable and transparent and

consolidates the patient/user and wider public position as central to service planning and provision. An equivalent approach is required in R&D in Wales. It is recognised that there are a range of potential consumer stakeholders in the health and social care sector ranging from the direct users of services to the wider public as potential and likely users of services. In relation to R&D the most appropriate consumer viewpoint should be included. In some cases this may be those who have a direct interest in the service concerned while in others a wider view may be more appropriate.

7.3 Four principal areas for the service users and the wider public involvement in R&D can be identified which will mirror those of professional groups with an interest in research and development. These are:

- Setting priorities for research;
- Participants in research;
- Undertaking research;
- Recipients of the results of research.

The achievement of effective stakeholder involvement will require careful planning to avoid tokenistic approaches and to enable the consumer viewpoint to fully incorporated into R&D development in Wales.

7.4 The other major stakeholder group in health and social care R&D development are the wide range of staff working in the health and social care sector. A key aim of the strategic framework is the development of a culture which fosters an awareness and uses of the results of R&D in day to day practice. To achieve a greater sense of ownership of research by practitioners there is a need to make research more accessible and directly applicable to the day to day work of health and social care staff and managers. This issue is addressed in Section 13.

### KEYSTONES

- Establish the Health and Social Care National Advisory Committee in 2002.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for consumer involvement at key stages of the research process.

## 8 Investment in Research and Development in Wales

8.1 The following provides an overview of the funding of health and social care related research in Wales. Four primary sources of funding exist:

- funding from government bodies including the National Assembly;
- funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales;
- charitable funding;
- funding from industry.

8.2 Data for 1999/2000 indicate that universities in Wales received 4.7% (£11 million) of the total UK spending by industrial sources on all types of R&D. In relation to charitable funding 2.1% (£10.4 million) was spent in Wales. The extent to which such funding relates to health and social care is currently unavailable. Again in 2000/2001 Wales received 3.2% of Research Council funding with £3.4 million coming from the Medical Research Council and £2.4 million from the Economic and Social Research Council of which £380,000 was related to health or social care. These figures indicate that Wales does not achieve the level of funding from these sources that might be expected on a per capita basis.

8.3 In 2001/02, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is providing £59.2 million for research to higher education institutions in Wales - £45.8 million through the main research grant, £11.7 million through the capital grant for research infrastructure, and the balance of £1.7 million through special initiatives. Of the £45.8 million provided, £11.1 million was made available for health and social care related research activity. From 2002/03 onwards, the main research

grant allocations will be based on the outcomes of the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise.

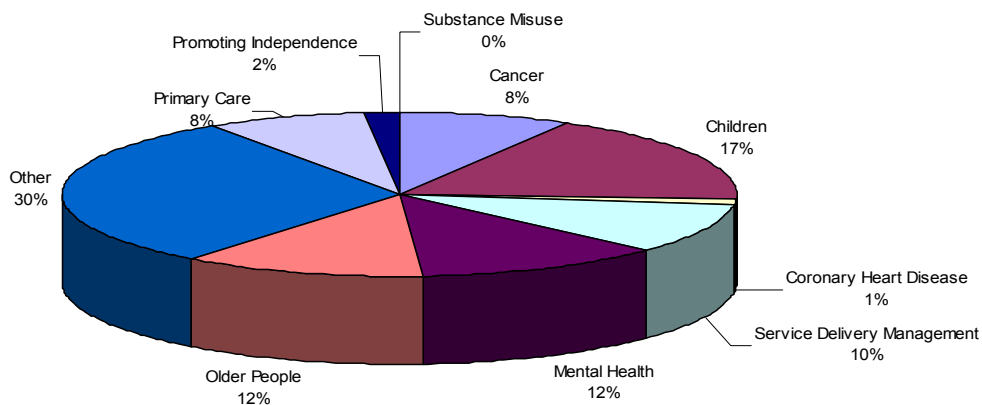
- 8.4 The National Assembly through the Wales Office of Research and Development provided £15 million to support health and social care related research in Wales in 2001/02. Of this £2.5 million was spent directly by the Assembly on health related grant schemes and £1.2 million on social care related grant schemes. The remaining £11.4 million was spent on work undertaken within NHS Trusts and Primary Care through the Provider Funding Scheme. In the field of health and social care further funding was available through the Health Protection and Improvement Group and through the Communities Directorate.
- 8.5 In general terms as illustrated by the table below the funding levels for health and social care R&D in Wales on a per capita basis are lower than those in England and Scotland. However the comparison given below excludes areas of activity included in the English and Scottish funding particularly those relating to public health.

**Table 1 – A Comparison of 2000/2001 R&D Funding in Wales, England and Scotland**

	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Per capita</b>
<b>Wales</b>	£13.8m	2.9m	£4.71
<b>England</b>	£448.8m	49.9m	£8.98
<b>Scotland</b>	£41.0m	5.1m	£8.02

- 8.6 The National Assembly is committed to simplifying the current separate streams of funding to support research which addresses the needs of the National Assembly and the Welsh population or supports the development of current and future Welsh researchers to make a wider contribution to the development of knowledge in health and social care. By unifying the current funds into a single resource and streamlining the application and allocation processes, against common priorities, the Assembly aims to ensure future funding is targeted and monitored more openly and effectively.

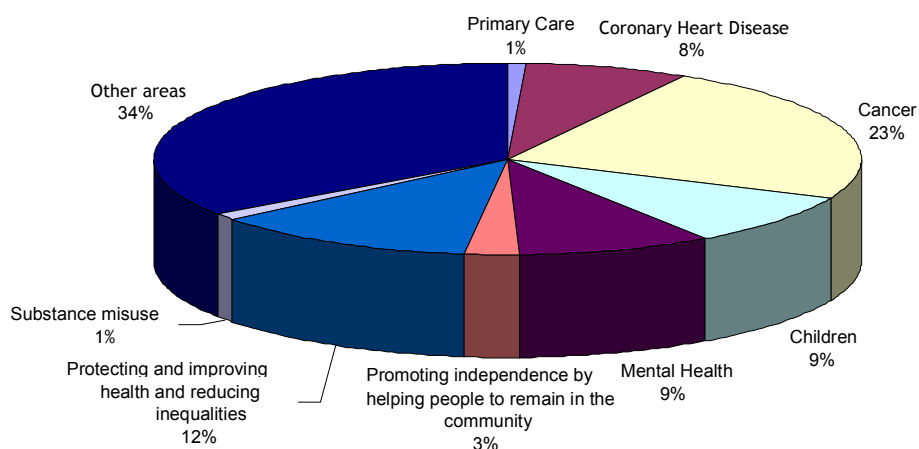
## WORD Responsive and Commissioned Grant Schemes 2000/2001



8.7 The diagram above gives an overview of WORD grant funding in 2000/01. The diagram illustrates that a significant amount of the current funding is being allocated to areas identified as priorities for Wales.

8.8 The diagram below provides an overview of the allocation of funding through the NHS Provider Funding Scheme into key priority areas for Wales. This funding has largely been allocated on the basis of programmes identified by NHS Providers and reflects a reasonable spread across identified priority areas.

## Financial Allocations to NHS Providers 2000/2001



8.9 A number of points can be made in relation to R&D funding in Wales.

- i. Investment made in high quality R&D in Wales will result in a return on that investment through achieving greater effectiveness in service delivery, potentially attracting research resources to Wales or technological development. However the returns may be far greater than can be estimated in purely immediate financial terms. Funding of research should be viewed as an investment that will generate returns. In addition mechanisms will be established to assess the returns on the investment made in R&D which include a wider assessment of the social returns on such investment.
- ii. There is evidence that Wales is not attracting its full potential share of external non-commercial research funding. There are no non-commercial externally funded research centres in Wales. The National Assembly views the establishment of such centres as a key priority and therefore recognises the need to provide support to researchers to ensure that they are well placed to bid for funds from UK and international funding bodies.
- iii. The funding base for research in Wales is comparatively small when compared to other parts of the UK. It is important that available funding is allocated to those

areas where there is a specific need for research in Wales and on areas of strength where high quality products are likely to arise from the investment.

- iv. In order to maximise the benefits of the investment available opportunities for obtaining external funding or joint funding opportunities will be sought. Collaborations already exist with the other health departments and opportunities for further collaborations with HEFCW, Research Councils or other UK and European funders will be examined.
- v. The nature of the investment made in the specific areas will be dependent on a number of factors including the need of a particular area for longer term stability and consolidation or where a short term investment is likely to result in returns. The investment can range from support for centres or networks, programmes of activity or project funding.
- vi. There can be no guarantee of further expansion of the current R&D budgets and the first priority is to review the current usage and make sure that current budgets are most effectively used. This will involve a review of current programmes in light of the new strategic framework. It will also be necessary to assess the validity of bids for Assembly funding against the wider R&D programmes underway elsewhere in the UK. Also, as indicated above, there is a need to ensure that maximum resources from other sources are being achieved.

### **KEYSTONES**

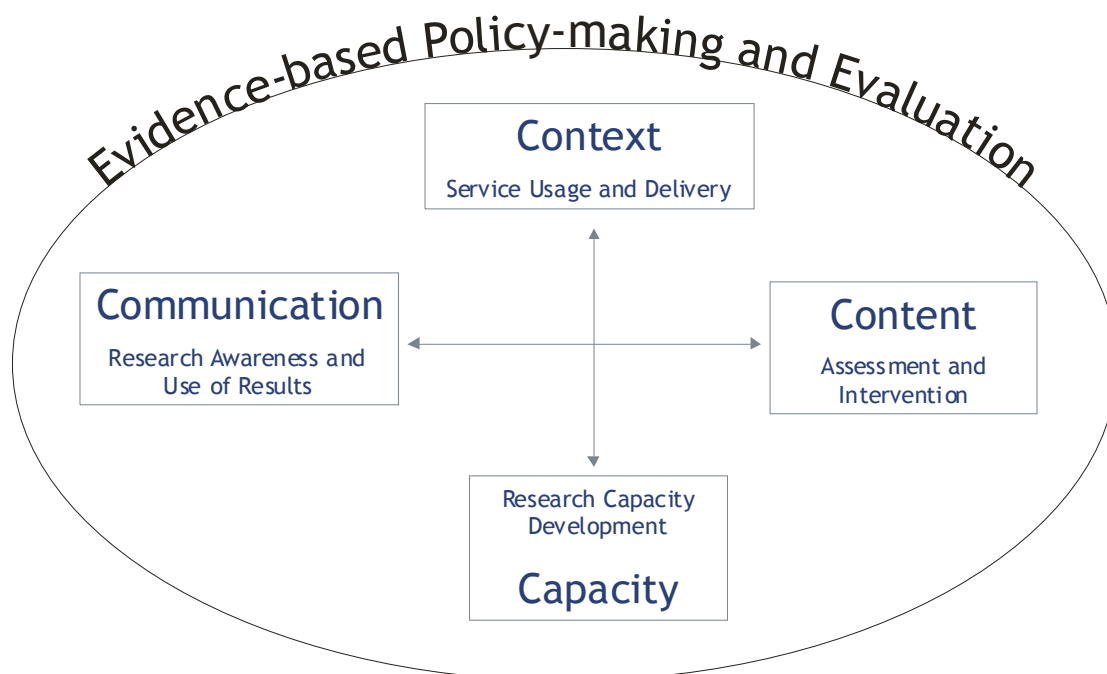
- Develop a co-ordinated approach to R&D spending taking into account all funding routes available to support Welsh researchers.
- Establish mechanisms to target National Assembly health and social care spending on key priorities.
- Support the efforts of researchers to attract external funding to Wales.
- Introduce mechanisms to identify the returns on investment in health and social care R&D.

## The Research and Development Programme for Wales

The vision of the strategic framework is the creation of an infrastructure that will enable Wales to be:

*A country which develops its policies on the basis of evidence and has mechanisms in place by which those planning and delivering health and social care services are aware of, and actively use, the results of research in their work*

The following provides an outline of such a framework and identifies the priorities for the first 5 years of the implementation of the strategic framework.



Within a framework for **evidence-based policy development and evaluation** four inter-related areas of research and development activity are identified. The four R&D areas are:

- **Context** – analysis of the nature of the determinants of health and social well-being and the demand for, and supply of, health and social care services;
- **Content** – analysis of effective assessments and interventions;
- **Capacity** – development of research capacity to deliver high quality R&D products;

- **Communication** – the translation of R&D results into policy practice and public knowledge.

## **9 Policy Development and Evaluation**

- 9.1 The National Assembly is committed to the evaluation of policy initiatives. The level and intensity of evaluation will reflect the significance of the policy being implemented or the degree of investment in that policy. At a minimum there will be an element of internal evaluation of policy initiatives. At the next a combination of self-evaluation supplemented by external independent evaluation. In the case of major policy initiatives a programme of independent evaluation will be integral to policy development and implementation. Opportunities for the incorporation of experimental methods into the policy implementation process through staggered implementation or comparisons of differing approaches to implementation will also be identified.
- 9.2 A key issue in the planning and provision of health and social care service delivery will be the ability to monitor trends in the health and social well-being of the Welsh population. Such mechanisms will enable the broad impact of policies to be assessed, allow for the identification of new health or social concerns and provide the means for identifying new research areas. The development of the Wales Centre for Health will be an important resource to support identifying health and social trends and assessing the risks involved in such trends.
- 9.3 Central to the development of such approaches is the availability of high quality information and intelligence to inform policy development and implementation. This will involve the development of capacity within the Assembly for evidence synthesis and closer working relationships with academics and researchers. There is a need generally to increase the ability to undertake high quality analysis and synthesis of research evidence.
- 9.4 To achieve the most successful and relevant R&D research priorities must be informed by high quality data on key groups/areas in Wales. Some work has

already started, for example in relation to children and people with disabilities. The development of national data sets focusing on such groups will enable more accurate planning and research commissioning to take place. These will also allow monitoring of trends over time in key sectors and contribute to policy evaluation. It is proposed that such data sets be developed from a combination of sources including statistical returns, national surveys, and longitudinal studies.

### **KEYSTONES**

- Improve the collection, validity and analysis of routine data.
- Develop links between R&D and developments in information management in health and social care.
- Ensure that the maximum use is made of existing data.
- Ensure the availability of expert advice on evaluation.
- Ensure that evaluation is built into all new service initiatives.
- Create mechanisms to ensure that health organisations and local authorities collaborate on new initiatives to ensure they are properly evaluated.

## **10 CONTEXT - Service Usage and Delivery Programme**

10.1 A key feature of service delivery in the health and social care sectors has been the continued growth in demand resulting in growing operating pressures as well as escalating costs. This situation has been accentuated by the development on new technologies and changes in the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Welsh population and increased expectations regarding service delivery. However uncertainty exists regarding those factors which are driving the increased demand and whether the current range of responses are the most appropriate for the individual or the most cost-effective.

10.2 There are three primary elements to the Service Usage and Delivery programme:

- Analysis of the determinants of health and social well-being and factors driving demand for services;

- Analysis of the structures, organisation and management of service delivery;
- The identification and analysis of outcomes of service delivery for users/patients.

10.3 Analysis of the demands for service support will consist of a range of activity including the socio-economic and cultural factors driving service demands as well as analysis of those factors which underlie help seeking-behaviours. This programme will be linked to the wider economic and social policy interests of the National Assembly. The analysis of the factors driving demands will be linked to research activity on the management of demand and the most effective responses to the needs of the Welsh population and implications for service delivery

10.4 There is a need to identify the most effective ways of delivering health and social care to the Welsh population. The development of an evidence based approach to the analysis and management of the demand for services will be linked to the development of the capacity within Wales to develop an evidenced based approach to service structure and management. Essentially this can be seen as an analysis of the demand and supply factors in health and social care services and their management. Such a programme of activity will need to be closely linked professional development in health and social care planning and management.

#### **KEYSTONES**

- Establish mechanisms to support research on demand and supply factors in health and social care in Wales.
- Establish links between research on demand and supply in health and social care and health and social care management initiatives.

## **11 CONTENT - Assessment and Interventions Research Programme**

11.1 There is a tradition of high quality research and development in biomedical and clinical health care. Partly as the result of the WORD social care responsive

programme there has been recent growth in research in Wales focusing on practice in the social care field. The development of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Social Care Institute for Excellence have both provided opportunities for channelling the results of research into practical guidelines for practitioners. The related developments in the National Service Frameworks have provided a further channel by which research can be seen to make a contribution to directly influencing the quality of care provided.

- 11.2 To a large degree the move to the implementation of programmes of R&D activity focussed on clinical activity or client groups will build on work already started in the NHS R&D Provider Funding Scheme. It is proposed that 5-year programmes will be implemented and that these consist of local, national and UK focussed activity. The initiatives outlined below will consist of contributions to UK initiatives, commissioned programmes of work or individual research projects.
- 11.3 Work on implementing the programmes in cancer has already begun. The cancer programme will consist of involvement in UK and international initiatives such as the National Cancer Research Institute. In addition research work of relevance to Wales, or where Wales can make a contribution to the wider field of cancer research will be undertaken. This work will need to build on the Wales Cancer Trials Network and the links to cancer clinical networks and the Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group.
- 11.4 Similar programmes will be required in the fields of mental health and primary care although in these cases such programmes are likely to focus on work identified in the mental health and primary care strategies and have scope for greater collaboration between health, local government and voluntary sectors.
- 11.5 A key priority for the Assembly is that of supporting children. In the current social care programme a number of commissioned research projects in these areas have been funded. It is proposed that this work is further developed to form a 5-year programme of R&D in the area of children and families. Similarly the current

development of a Strategy for Older People in Wales provides an opportunity for the development of a programme of work in the area of supporting older people.

11.6 The R&D strategy provides an opportunity for the development of a public health R&D programme building on the Public Health Review and the stocktake of public health research in Wales. An analysis of the research undertaken by health authorities could provide the basis for the creation of a public health R&D budget for Wales.

11.7 The development of clinical governance and social care professional practice will be dependent on an ability to undertake thorough analyses of existing research results in key topic areas and the translation of results into guidance for practitioners. This will not only involve fostering of better links between the Welsh research community and bodies such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence but the development of recognised high quality capacity in Wales to undertake such work.

### **KEYSTONES**

- Development of clinical trials and other research networks, in such areas as cancer, primary care, children.
- Develop the capacity for research synthesis in Wales.
- Establishment of research centres of excellence, building on existing infrastructure and expertise.
- Assessment of new interventions through establishing collaborations between research networks and service providers.

## **12 CAPACITY – Research Capacity Development Programme**

12.1 Critical to the successful development of research and development in Wales is a high quality research workforce. Wales has many researchers of international standard and clearly a strategy will need to ensure that those individuals will

remain in Wales and that new high quality researchers continue to emerge. The development of research capacity in Wales therefore requires careful planning. This will include the need to identify areas of high policy and practice priority where the research capacity is weak.

- 12.2 The Research Assessment Exercise has highlighted the strength of basic and clinical sciences in Wales. Laboratory based work in basic science is now being undertaken on an international basis through networks and groups. Similarly clinical trials are usually undertaken on a UK or international basis. This activity must continue to be supported. The primary means of support from Wales will be to ensure that skilled researchers are developed in Wales to work in these critical areas.
- 12.3 Recruitment and retention of high quality staff is becoming of increasing importance in the public sector. As indicated in *Improving Health in Wales* research and development has a part to play in helping to recruit and retain staff and also in generally maintaining the quality of service delivery. Similarly recent work on the social care workforce has highlighted the challenge to be faced in recruiting and retaining staff. Opportunities to be involved in research through participation in high quality R&D either as a researcher or a practitioner will be essential in creating stimulating working environments for service staff. In achieving such a position it will be essential that firm links are established between the professional development of staff and access to opportunities to develop research skills or obtain the most up-to-date results of research.
- 12.4 As indicated above a co-ordinated approach to the development of the research workforce is required. This will need to be done in collaboration with others with a responsibility for professional development in the service and academic sectors and could include joint funding initiatives for areas of specific priority for Wales. The review of higher education in Wales has highlighted the need for collaborative working across Welsh institutions to develop a critical mass of research activity that is capable of attracting external funding. Section 8 described the wide range of current funders and such funding is frequently in the area of developing new

researchers. WORD currently operates a number of capacity development initiatives and these need to be co-ordinated and focused on key priority areas.

### **KEYSTONES**

- Identifying skills gaps in key priority areas.
- Developing health service research in collaboration with other funding bodies.
- Training programmes to supply career scientists and to develop professional research competencies.
- 2-way secondments between research centres and services providers to develop and undertake implementation plans in specific areas of service provision.
- Traineeships based in service-providers and enrolled on HEI research training courses, with the opportunity to write up specific implementation.

## **13 COMMUNICATION - Dissemination/Awareness Programme**

13.1 Traditionally much of the focus of research management has been on the commissioning process with relatively less attention having been given to ensuring that the results of research are used. Put bluntly, there is limited purpose in even the best research and development if it is carried out in a vacuum, and the results not shared with those working in the services, or in allied research activity. Dissemination is therefore a critical part of the R&D process and will be a priority for the new strategy in Wales. The National Assembly has made a commitment to ensuring that the results of research and evaluation will be used to inform practice and policy development. The Research Governance Framework issued in Wales in 2002 specifies that undertaking research for which there is no clear purpose and no plans for the publication of results is an ethical matter and clearly a matter of concern in the use of public funds.

- 13.2 Ensuring use of research results will need to begin at the earliest point in the commissioning process. Clear customers must be identified at the point of initiation of research and a planned programme drawn up to manage the dissemination and use of the results. This principle will be applied to work commissioned by the National Assembly and applications made through competitive schemes.
- 13.3 Initiatives such as clinical governance and evidence based practice have provided a further incentive to ensuring that practitioners are made aware of the most up-to-date thinking and are able to use the results of research in practice. Critical in achieving such a situation will be reinforcing the links between practice, teaching and training and research. In addition there will be a need to develop the links between research and development and other quality improvement initiatives such as audit and inspection and performance management.
- 13.4 A number of different avenues will need to be pursued to achieve a better dialogue between research results and practice. These include:
- mechanisms that support the links between professional development and research;
  - the full use of electronic media to assist practitioners to access research results;
  - a co-ordinated approach to research synthesis;
  - links with other service improvement processes;
  - regular events which link research findings and practice and policy development;
  - the development of a research aware culture within service settings.
- 13.5 The health and social care sectors are increasingly recognised as key players in the economy of Wales. Firstly they are the main employers within Wales. Secondly they are sources of innovation and development of new technologies which are capable of exploitation commercially. To date, much of this has taken place on an institutional or individual basis and there is now a need for a co-ordinated approach to the proper exploitation of ideas arising from R&D. This will enable the

public sector to benefit through the establishment of support mechanisms assisting individuals or groups with good ideas.

13.6 It is proposed that further developments take place across three fronts in relation to this area:

- A framework of operating principles is developed for those working in health or social care services or are collaborating with this sector on the procedures for commercial exploitation of innovations emerging from R&D;
- Support to those wishing to commercially exploit innovations through the availability of expert advice and guidance on setting up commercial ventures;
- Developing the relationship between the health and social care sector and industry to enable commercial expertise to be employed to address health and social care issues and to enable industry to work with these sectors in developing new products which are likely to be beneficial to patients/users.

#### **KEYSTONES**

- Introduce procedures for planning the dissemination and use of research results into the commissioning process.
- Develop a framework of operating principles for the commercial exploitation of ideas emerging from R&D.
- Develop links between professional training and continuing professional development and R&D.
- Establishment of dissemination networks.
- Closed email distribution lists for researchers and practitioners across Wales, dedicated to particular areas of interest.

## **14 Conclusion and Next Steps**

14.1 This strategic framework has outlined a direction for R&D in Wales designed to achieve the goal of Wales becoming a country recognised as developing practice and policy on the basis of high quality evidence. A long-term framework to achieve such a goal has been outlined. Three areas have been identified as priorities for the first five years of implementation of the strategic framework. These are:

- Establishing an infrastructure to support analyses of the health and social care needs of the Welsh population;
- The creation of a health and social care research workforce capable of delivering high quality research in key areas;
- The creation of a culture and an infrastructure in which evidence based practice and policy making can occur.

14.2 Following the consultation period a five year implementation plan will be produced which in addition to specifying ways in which the strategy will be implemented, will also assess the implication of the strategy for key sectors and groups with an interest in health and social care.

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